

may be a sound suggestion. That is a matter which must be considered. But the amendment in its own terms precludes the possibility of this or any other suggestion being considered by the committee. To accept this amendment—and I am not absolutely certain whether I shall accept it or not—would mean that we would commit ourselves to a particular line of action, a particular method of dealing with the situation, without having before us information whether that line of policy is the best or not. There to my mind is the weakness. The committee itself, in possession of all those facts, might recommend such a solution as has been offered by the hon. member for Burrard (Mr. Clark). On the other hand, the committee might recommend some other solution which might be more effective. Again, I reiterate that the weakness of the amendment lies in the fact that it precludes the obtaining of that necessary information and foundation of facts on the part of this House.

In conclusion, there are many points to consider in connection with this matter. The attitude assumed by the British parliament in discussing this question must be taken into account. A few days ago I read a brief despatch in the *Manitoba Free Press* in which it was pointed out in the British House that this same Peterson had been guaranteed by the Service committee a bonus of some £600,000 for the construction of these same vessels, and it was further intimated that as a result of the action on the part of this government that guarantee would be withdrawn. Now, I want to ask hon. gentlemen if it would not be wise, before committing ourselves to a policy of expenditure, to consider, in the first place, whether Sir William Petersen might receive a bonus on the one hand and a subsidy on the other, and so be placed in a very enviable position indeed.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Unenviable?

Mr. SPEAKMAN: Enviable. If he received a large bonus from the British parliament and a large subsidy from the Canadian parliament I think he would be in a very enviable position indeed. All those points must be considered by the committee and dealt with upon their merits in reaching a decision. Personally I am not unalterably opposed to this contract, if it is proved beyond peradventure or doubt that this is the only possible method, and that there is some hope of its being successful. I realize that while the principle is unsound, the cost great and the value dubious, yet sometimes desperate diseases require desperate remedies; and I

think this might be considered as falling within the class of desperate remedies.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Would it help my hon. friend in clearing up what he has in mind if Sir William Petersen were asked to come out and appear before the committee? If so, I think we ought to send him word at once and I imagine he would be very glad to come.

Mr. SPEAKMAN: I think it would be for the committee to say what witnesses they want to call. I should think that the members of the committee would request the attendance of all witnesses whose evidence would be of any value.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: My hon. friend must realize that Sir William Petersen is a busy man, and therefore if he is to be summoned to appear before the committee I think it would be advisable to let him know immediately and ask him to arrange his plans accordingly. I am trying to oblige my hon. friend by assuring the attendance of Sir William when the committee is ready to take his evidence.

Mr. SPEAKMAN: I appreciate the kindness of the Prime Minister, but as a private member I have no authority to request that any witness be brought before the committee.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Yes you have, as a member.

Mr. SPEAKMAN: The committee itself must decide what witnesses it will summon to appear.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: My hon. friend as a member of this House not only has authority, he has responsibility to see that the right people do appear before the committee.

Mr. SPEAKMAN: If the Prime Minister wishes my individual opinion, I should very much like to hear what Sir William Petersen has to say in the matter, I should also like to hear what Mr. Preston and what the representatives of the companies attacked by Mr. Preston have to say. In fine, I should like to hear both sides so that any opinion I form may be based upon as accurate a knowledge as possible of all the facts and circumstances of the case.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I undertake to tell my hon. friend right now that the government will immediately ask Sir William Petersen to be here; it will also expect Mr. Preston to appear before the committee and the representatives of all the companies mentioned in his report.